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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Governor Snyder declares state of disaster in 19 counties and two cities due to flooding**

*State requests federal officials to assist with assessing damage*

LANSING, Mich. – Gov. Rick Snyder today declared a state of disaster for 19 counties and two cities – Grand Rapids and Ionia – to support ongoing local efforts to respond to the severe flooding that has affected parts of Michigan.

Along with Grand Rapids and Ionia, the governor's disaster declaration also covers the following counties: Baraga, Barry, Benzie, Genesee, Gogebic, Gratiot, Houghton, Ionia, Kent, Keweenaw, Marquette, Mecosta, Midland, Muskegon, Newaygo, Ontonagon, Osceola, Ottawa and Saginaw.

The declaration will ensure that all possible resources, in accordance with the Michigan Emergency Management Plan, are provided to assist the local response to the flooding, which took place April 9 through May 3.

“Our first responders and volunteer organizations must be commended for their tireless efforts to protect the public's safety during this flooding. This declaration makes available all the state resources that are needed to continue supporting local officials in their ongoing work to keep the public safe as the recovery efforts begin,” Snyder said. “We will be exploring all possible avenues for assistance to help affected residents and local governments recover from the severe flooding.”

The governor has asked the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to join state and local officials later this week to assess the extent of damage to homes, businesses, public facilities and infrastructure. The Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) process is the initial step to assist state officials in determining whether a federal declaration should be requested.

During the assessment, the joint PDA teams, comprised of local, state and federal officials, will assess the extent of damage that was incurred by homeowners, renters and businesses. The teams will also assess the damage to public infrastructure, as well as the overall impacts to the communities.

The teams will visit the most severely impacted areas based on information gathered during local damage assessments. While the teams may not visit every affected home and business, all of the local damage assessment information will be included in the overall results. Affected residents and business owners are encouraged to report any damages to their local emergency management agency.

To assist with the damage assessment process, affected residents and business owners should have information readily available about the extent of their damage, including the location of flooding in living areas and the depth of floodwaters, as well as if the damage is covered by insurance. In the event individuals are not available when teams are in their area, residents are encouraged to provide information about their damage to a neighbor or leave information at the front door.

The State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) has been actively engaged in monitoring the flooding since April 19. The Michigan State Police, Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division (MSP/EMHSD) continues to work with local and federal officials to gather damage and cost information necessary to determine whether the area may be eligible for federal funds of any kind.

Snyder's disaster declaration authorizes the MSP/EMHSD to coordinate and maximize all state efforts to address public health and safety concerns in the affected jurisdictions, as well as to coordinate with federal agencies to provide any available assistance to help with recovery efforts.

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**Media note-** Members of the media will have an opportunity to get photos and video of the Preliminary Damage Assessment teams. More information will be provided once details are finalized.